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STATE FOR EUR/CE K. ERTAS AND L. LOCHMAN

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SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE SLOVAK RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON
ECONOMIC CRISIS

REF: STATE 23758

¶1. (U) Charge d'Affaires delivered reftel points to Finance Minister Pociatek and to MFA Political Director Slobodnik in separate March 18 meetings. While acknowledging that Slovakia remains one of the stronger economies in the region, we stressed that the focus of USG concern was early and adequate European response to the deterioration of a number of Central and Eastern European economies. Pociatek promised to convey our message directly to PM Robert Fico, with whom he will be traveling to Brussels for the March 19 EU summit on the crisis.

¶2. (SBU) Pociatek lamented that it is hard to know the right approach to the crisis, particularly the right level of fiscal stimulus, and expressed some skepticism about the wisdom of further deepening fiscal deficits. He also took note of the lack of EU consensus, even within the European Monetary Union. Based on his reaction to our points -- as well as the fiscally moderate approach the GoS has taken to stimulus spending thus far -- we believe Slovakia is likely to remain in the conservative camp during EU discussions.
EDDINS